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Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/241. It provides a discussion of progress in and challenges to poverty eradication and an evaluation of the implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017). It concludes with recommendations for consideration by the Assembly to maintain the momentum generated by the implementation of the Decade in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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I. Introduction

1. The international community continued to make progress in eradicating poverty during the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017). Globally, Millennium Development Goal 1.A — halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than $1.25 a day — was attained five years ahead of schedule, in 2010. Significant progress was also made in reducing the prevalence of undernourishment, maternal and child mortality rates and the prevalence of malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. Enrolment rates for primary school-aged children increased in many countries, as did access to safe water and sanitation. The Decade also saw progress in closing the gender gap in education and health. However, the pace of job creation remains inadequate for a growing labour force, despite signs of an improving world economy.

2. The Second Decade focused political attention on poverty eradication, which is a key challenge to development, and ensured that the issue remained at the core of social, economic and environmental policies. It also served as a platform for the mobilization of resources, the establishment of stronger partnerships for development and the enhancement of United Nations system-wide coherence for poverty eradication.

II. Progress in eradicating poverty, creating employment and reducing inequality[1]

A. Global progress in eradicating poverty and hunger

3. Remarkable progress made since 1990 has lifted 1 billion people out of extreme poverty, 440 million of whom between 2008 and 2013. In 2008, the year marking the beginning of the Second Decade, 17.8 per cent of the world's population lived on less than $1.90 a day (2011 purchasing power parity). By 2013, the most recent year for which official estimates exist, 10.7 per cent of the world's population was extremely poor. In absolute terms, the number of people living in poverty declined from approximately 1.2 billion in 2008 to 766.01 million in 2013.[2] The World Bank estimates that 9.1 per cent of the world's population was poor in 2016.[3] Such swift progress is unprecedented in history.

4. Progress has been uneven across and within regions, however. Levels of poverty fell sharply in Asia, from 20.5 per cent in 2008 to 8.6 per cent in 2013. Striking reductions in extreme poverty in East Asia and the Pacific, especially in China, account for most of this decline. In fact, the largest gains in poverty reduction were achieved in rural China, with more than 700 million rural poor people being lifted out of poverty since the enactment of the reform and open-door policy in the late 1970s. With more than half of the global population living in those areas, progress in East Asia and the Pacific has been critical to global efforts to

[1] Unless otherwise stated, information pertaining to indicators in the present report is taken from the statistical annex to the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2016/75). See http://unstats.un.org/sdgs/.

[2] World Bank, World Development Indicators database. Available from http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/world-development-indicators.

[3] Christoph Lakner, Mario Negre and Espen Beer Prydz, "Twinning the goals: how can promoting shared prosperity help to reduce global poverty?", Policy Research Working Paper, No. 7106 (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2014). Available from http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/816921468339602084/Twinning-the-goals-how-can-promoting-shared-prosperity-help-to-reduce-global-poverty.

eradicate poverty. The poverty rate in that region declined from 14.9 per cent in 2008 to 3.5 per cent in 2013. In absolute terms, the number of people living in poverty fell from 288.19 million to 71.02 million between 2008 and 2013. The period 2011-2013 saw the number of extreme poor decline by 95.9 million people compared with a decline of 70 million people during the period 2008-2010, suggesting an accelerated pace of progress in the recent past. The region's global share of the extreme poor fell sharply, from 23.9 per cent in 2008 to 9.3 per cent in 2013.

5. In comparison, the poverty rate in South Asia fell from 29.4 per cent in 2008 to 15.1 per cent in 2013, with most of the gains being accounted for by progress in India. Nevertheless, South Asia has the second largest concentration of people living in extreme poverty in the world, behind sub-Saharan Africa (256.2 million people living in poverty in 2013, compared with 388.7 million). In Latin America and the Caribbean, levels of poverty fell from 7.1 per cent in 2008 to 5.4 per cent in 2013. The reduction in income inequality in most countries of the region since the early 2000s and the expansion of social protection schemes and measures contributed to this decline. In the Middle East and North Africa, extreme poverty was very low (below 2 per cent) and declined up to 2013. Poverty levels have since increased slightly, however, owing to conflict. In Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand), levels of poverty were high, declining from 38.2 per cent in 2008 to 27.2 per cent in 2013.

6. In Europe, extreme poverty was also quite low, with a poverty rate of 0.11 per cent in 2008 and 0.14 per cent in 2013. Nevertheless, relative poverty (incomes below 60 per cent of the median) remains a major concern. In the European Union, relative poverty, social exclusion, severe material deprivation and the number of households with low work intensity have increased in several countries since 2008. The number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the States members of the European Union (excluding Croatia) increased from 116 million in 2008 to 120 million in 2012-2014, then fell to 118 million in 2015. The number of income-poor (people at risk of poverty) increased to 86 million in 2015, from 81 million in 2008.[4] Disparities in these conditions also increased between and within countries.

7. Levels of relative poverty decreased in other developed countries. In Australia, the headline poverty rate (after housing costs) stood at 13.3 per cent in 2013/14, down from 14.4 per cent in 2007/08. In the United States of America, the official poverty rate declined to 13.5 per cent in 2015 from 15.1 per cent in 2010. Globally, levels of poverty among children are also high, with 1 in 5 children in rich countries living in relative income poverty and 1 in 8 facing food insecurity.[5] In Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, levels of poverty are low when using the measure of $1.90 a day, but rise to 46.7 per cent in Tajikistan and 38.0 per cent in Kyrgyzstan when using national poverty lines.[6]

8. Progress has also been made on other dimensions of poverty. In the period 2014-2016, about 793 million people were undernourished globally compared with 878.2 million in the period 2008-2010. The proportion of undernourished people

[4] Anthony B. Atkinson, Anne-Catherine Guio and Eric Marlier, eds. *Monitoring Social Inclusion in Europe*, 2017 ed. (Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2017).

[5] United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Office of Research — Innocenti, *Building the Future: Children and the Sustainable Development Goals in Rich Countries* (Florence, Italy, 2017). Available from www.unicef-irc.org/publications/890/.

[6] Eurostat, "Statistics explained". Available from http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Main_Page (accessed 1 June 2017).

declined to 10.8 per cent in 2014-2016, from 12.9 per cent in 2008-2010.[7] The majority of undernourished people live in developing countries, with 2 in 3 living in Asia. Progress in reducing hunger has been rapid in Latin America and Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, but slow in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. In Africa, climatic shocks, drought conditions and ongoing conflict in north-east Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen have contributed to an increase in the number of people experiencing crisis-level food insecurity or worse, from 80 million in 2015 to 108 million in 2016.[8]

9. Globally, the number of children under 5 years of age suffering from stunting stood at 155 million in 2016 compared with 198.4 million in 2000, while wasting affected an estimated 52 million children. Africa and Asia bear the greatest burden of all forms of malnutrition. For example, in 2016, 56 per cent of all stunted children under 5 years of age lived in Asia and 38 per cent in Africa. Similarly, more than two thirds of all wasted children under 5 years of age lived in Asia and more than a quarter in Africa.[9]

10. Furthermore, about 1.1 billion people still live without electricity, water scarcity affects more than 2 billion people and close to 1 billion people in poor countries lack access to an all-weather road. The number of people living in slum conditions increased to 880 million in 2014, from 792 million in 2000.

B. Progress in eradicating poverty in Africa and the least developed countries

11. The proportion of people in Africa living on less than $1.90 a day fell from 44.8 per cent in 2008 to 39.2 per cent in 2013. In sub-Saharan Africa, progress has been much slower, with the poverty headcount ratio falling to 40.9 per cent in 2013 from 47.0 per cent in 2008. With the world's fastest-growing population, further progress in reducing extreme poverty is a bigger challenge in sub-Saharan Africa.

12. In the least developed countries, extreme poverty fell from 43.6 per cent in 2008 to 36.3 per cent in 2013. Levels of extreme poverty continue to be very high in African least developed countries. In 2013, rates exceeded 70 per cent in Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Malawi and South Sudan. However, the least developed countries have made important gains in other areas. Access to clean water increased to 68 per cent in 2014, from 60 per cent in 2005. Levels of child mortality have decreased and gender parity in primary education has improved. The under-5 mortality rate declined from 90.1 per 1,000 live births in 2010 to 72.8 per 1,000 live births in 2015. In 2014, the adjusted net enrolment rate for primary education was 40.4 per cent for girls and 39.9 per cent for boys. In 2010, the adjusted enrolment rates were 33.8 and 33.5 per cent for girls and boys, respectively.

13. Despite strong economic performance by Africa as a whole over the past two decades, that growth has not been translated into significant reductions in poverty and has failed to create enough good jobs. The continent's rapid growth is primarily resource driven and has not occurred in sectors in which large numbers of the working poor are found. Commodity-led growth is less inclusive, creates fewer jobs

[7] Figure for 2008-2010 from Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, International Fund for Agricultural Development and World Food Programme, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2013: The Multiple Dimensions of Food Security* (Rome, 2013).

[8] Food Security Information Network, "Global report on food crises 2017" (Rome, 2017).

[9] UNICEF, World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank, "Joint child malnutrition estimates", 2017 ed. Available from https://data.unicef.org/resources/joint-child-malnutrition-estimates-2017-edition/.

and contributes to rising inequality in some countries. Progress has also been much slower because of the depth and severity of poverty. People living in extreme poverty in Africa start the furthest behind the international poverty line of $1.90 a day. In 2011, 22 per cent of Africans lived on between $0.70 and $1.25 a day, while 25 per cent lived on less than $0.70. For the rest of the developing world, the average income of a person living in extreme poverty in 2011 was $0.98 per day.[10] Therefore, although average incomes have been rising, growth has not been swiftly or inclusive enough to push large numbers of people over the $1.90 a day threshold.

14. The least developed countries are also experiencing the slowest pace of economic expansion since 2000. While average growth improved to 4.7 per cent in 2017 and is forecast to reach 5.3 per cent in 2018, it is well below the Sustainable Development Goal target of at least 7 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) per annum in the least developed countries. Under the current growth trajectory and assuming no changes in income inequality, an estimated 35 per cent of the population in least developed countries, heavily indebted poor countries and countries in conflict and post-conflict situations may remain trapped in extreme poverty in 2030.[11]

C. Promoting productive employment and decent work

15. While the centrality of employment and decent jobs to the eradication of poverty is well recognized, employment growth has not been sufficient to absorb the growing labour force, especially in those countries and regions with large youth populations. Moreover, there has been a divergence between productivity and wage growth, together with growing employment insecurity in both developed and developing countries. These trends are pushing people, especially young people and vulnerable and marginalized groups, into non-standard and precarious jobs. The extended weakness of the global economy has also been marked by pervasive decent work deficits, unequal labour market opportunities for women and young people and growing discontent with the prevailing social and economic situation.

16. In 2017, an estimated 5.7 per cent of workers around the world were not employed but looking for a job, down from 6.2 per cent at the peak of the global financial crisis in 2009 and from 6.0 per cent in 2008 at the beginning of the Second Decade. Globally, unemployment is expected to affect 201 million people in 2017, representing an additional 24 million unemployed compared with 2008. Global unemployment is also set to rise by 2.7 million in 2018, bringing total unemployment to 203.8 million. About 1.4 billion of those employed in 2017 are in vulnerable forms of employment. The number of workers in vulnerable forms of employment is projected to grow by 11 million per year. Over 70 per cent of these workers live in Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.[12]

17. In addition to pervasive decent work deficits, emerging and developing countries continue to experience high levels of working poverty (income below $3.10 per day). While both the rate and the number of working poor are expected to continue a long-term decline, progress is stalling. The rate of extreme and moderate

[10] Laurence Chandy, Veronika Penciakova and Natasha Ledlie, "Africa's challenge to end extreme poverty by 2030: too slow or too far behind?", 29 May 2013. Available from www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2013/05/29/africas-challenge-to-end-extreme-poverty-by-2030-too-slow-or-too-far-behind/.

[11] *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2017* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.17.II.C.2). Update as at mid-2017.

[12] International Labour Organization, *World Employment Social Outlook: Trends 2017* (Geneva, 2017).

working poverty declined from 29.4 per cent in 2016 to 28.7 per cent in 2017. This represents a decline in the number of working poor from 783 million in 2016 to 776.2 million in 2017. This number is expected to decline further, to 769.4 million, in 2018. Nearly two thirds of workers in sub-Saharan Africa and half in Southern Asia are working poor.

18. Informality is a key contributor to working poverty. More than half of non-agricultural employment in most developing countries is informal, especially in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Informal employment is a greater source of employment for women than for men. More than 4 in 5 employed women workers in non-agricultural sectors in South Asia are informally employed, and about three quarters in sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, half to two thirds of all informal workers outside of the agricultural sector are self-employed.

19. In contrast, levels of unemployment are expected to fall in developed countries, from 6.3 per cent in 2016 to 6.2 per cent in 2017. Unemployment rates have fallen in the United States and the European Union. In the States members of the European Union (excluding Croatia), 6.6 million jobs were created between 2013 and 2016 and unemployment is at its lowest since 2009. Levels of youth unemployment are also falling as a result of programmes such as the Youth Guarantee scheme, which has benefited 14 million young people since 2014.[13]

D. Combating inequality

20. Accelerating poverty reduction and ending extreme poverty by 2030 also hinge on reducing inequality. Levels of poverty tend to fall at a faster pace in countries with initially lower levels of inequality. High levels of income inequality reduce the impact of growth on poverty, while decreasing inequality tends to contribute to poverty reduction at any given growth rate. Rising inequality is also associated with higher risks of social exclusion and political instability and with less than the highest possible standards in education and health care.

21. The Gini coefficient of global income inequality declined from 70.5 per cent in 2008[14] to 65 per cent in 2013.[15] Much of this decline is due to fast growth in populous developing countries. Nevertheless, the gap between rich and poor countries remains large. Furthermore, income inequality has been rising within most countries and inequalities persist in access to education, health care, productive assets and finance.

22. Trends in inequality within countries are mixed. In advanced economies, income inequality between the rich and the poor is at its highest level in decades, except for a decrease in some European countries between 2008 and 2012 following income losses suffered by those in the upper part of the income distribution during the global financial and economic crisis. In many European countries, the size of income redistribution measures has been critical in reducing income inequality. Pensions have a huge redistributive effect in Austria, France and Germany. In Central Europe, levels of income inequality remain considerably higher than in the

[13] See http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079.

[14] Christoph Lakner and Branko Milanovic, "Global income distribution: from the fall of the Berlin Wall to the great recession", Policy Research Working Paper, No. 6719 (Washington, D.C, World Bank, 2013). Available from http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/914431468162277879/pdf/WPS6719.pdf.

[15] Tomas Hellebrandt and Paolo Mauro, "The future of worldwide income distribution", Peterson Institute for International Economics Working Paper, No.15-7 (Washington, D.C., Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2015). Available from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2593894.

pre-transition period. Nonetheless, income inequality in these countries remains low by international standards. Inequality has also increased in the Russian Federation and in some other States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

23. In Africa, income inequality rose in some countries but fell in others. In Asia, inequalities have increased in several countries since the early 1990s, as growth has been less inclusive and less pro-poor. Inequalities have also risen sharply between rural and urban areas and among social groups. In the Middle East and North Africa, income inequality is relatively low compared with other regions and declined during the 2000s. There are, however, persistent gaps in the empowerment of women and young people in economic, political and social life. In Latin America and the Caribbean, most countries have succeeded in reducing income inequality since the early 2000s, although they started from levels that were some of the highest in the world. Recent progress in reducing both inequality and poverty is linked to high economic growth that saw the labour income of the lowest quintile increase at a faster pace than that of the top income quintile. The fall in inequality is also due to active social and labour market policies that boosted the participation of women in the labour market and narrowed the wage gap between skilled and low-skilled workers. These policies also reduced inequality in opportunities and tackled discrimination against ethnic/racial minorities and indigenous groups.

III. Progress in implementing social policies for eradicating poverty

A. Investment in education

24. The expansion of the education system and the improvement of its quality are important for growth, poverty eradication and reducing inequality. Gains resulting from industrialization and productivity increase much faster when coupled with significant progress on education beyond primary schooling. Evidence from developing countries covering the period 1965-2010 has shown that increasing the number of years of schooling among adults by two years could lift nearly 60 million people out of poverty, while achieving universal primary and secondary education would help to lift 420 million people out of poverty.[16] Education also has other social benefits, such as breaking the intergenerational transmission of poverty and reducing inequality, fertility rates and maternal and child mortality rates. It also improves prospects for decent employment and higher lifetime earnings. Higher levels of female education also reduce other dimensions of poverty such as child morbidity and mortality.

25. Expansion of the education system that also includes investment in early childhood education and teachers and harnessing the power of information and communication technology is also critical. Investing in early education generates returns over a person's life, from increasing cognitive and achievement scores to higher earning potential in adulthood. A dollar spent on early childhood education earns between $6 and $17 in public benefits.[17] Nevertheless, only 38 countries provide free and compulsory pre-primary education for at least one year. In most

[16] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "Reducing global poverty through universal primary and secondary education" (Paris, 2017). Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0025/002503/250392e.pdf.

[17] World Bank, "Improving learning outcomes through early childhood development" (Washington, D.C., 2016). Available from http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/827581468189575720/pdf/98448-REVISED-PUBLIC-03-WB-Improving-Learning-ECD-041116-print.pdf.

cases, it is children from the richest families who mostly attend early childhood education, not those from poorest families.

26. Over the course of the Second Decade, countries have continued to consolidate the educational gains made since the launch of the Millennium Development Goals, but progress has stalled in recent years. The primary school net enrolment rate in the developing regions reached 91 per cent in 2015, up from 89 per cent in 2008.[18] Gross enrolment rates also increased globally at all levels of education. These gains notwithstanding, 264 million children, adolescents and young people were out of school in 2015, of whom, 61 million were of primary school age, 62 million lower secondary school age and 141 million upper secondary school age.[19] If current trends continue, approximately 15 million girls of primary school age will never have the opportunity to enrol in primary school compared with about 10 million boys, over 9 million of whom live in sub-Saharan Africa. There are still 758 million illiterate adults globally, the majority of whom are women.

27. Furthermore, public spending on education remains inadequate. In at least 35 countries, Governments spent less than 4 per cent of GDP and less than 15 per cent of their total expenditure on education.[20] Adequate funding, equitable resource allocation and the efficient use of resources for the education sector are vital to reduce the number of out-of-school children, enhance equality in education and address the lack of trained teachers.

B. Investment in health care

28. Substantial progress has been made in the health sector during the past decade, including lowering the incidence of poverty-related diseases in poor countries. Health and life expectancy have improved almost everywhere, reducing the gap between countries and regions. The number of people dying from malaria and HIV has been halved, while the number of child deaths has declined to below 6 million — a 50 per cent reduction in annual deaths since 1990.[21] The progress made notwithstanding, challenges remain in reducing the burden of disease and financing the health sector in developing countries. Chronic non-communicable diseases have also emerged as a leading killer.

29. According to the World Health Organization, the average national percentage of total government expenditure on the health sector was 11.7 per cent in 2014. There was a slight increase in the level of public health expenditure and a slight decline in out-of-pocket expenditure both globally and in low-income countries between 1995 and 2014.

30. The world has made steady progress in reducing maternal mortality. The global maternal mortality ratio fell from 385 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 216 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2015. Globally, however, more than 300,000 women died owing to pregnancy-related or childbirth-related complications in 2015. In that same year, the maternal mortality ratio in developing regions stood at 239

[18] *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2010* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.10.I.7) and *The Millennium Development Goals Report 2015* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.15.I.7).

[19] UNESCO, "Reducing global poverty" (see footnote 16).

[20] UNESCO, *Global Education Monitoring Report 2016: Education for People and Planet — Creating Sustainable Futures for All* (Paris, 2016). Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002457/245752e.pdf.

[21] WHO, *World Health Statistics 2017: Monitoring Health for the Sustainable Development Goals* (Geneva, 2017). Available from http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/255336/1/9789241565486-eng.pdf?ua=1.

deaths per 100,000 live births compared with 12 deaths per 100,00 live births in developed regions.[22] Ending preventable maternal mortality requires investment in the health sector and the addressing of inequities in access to health services among population groups. In 2016, 78.5 per cent of births were attended by skilled birth attendants. The global under-5 mortality rate declined from 51.7 per 1,000 live births in 2010 to 43 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2015. Globally, there were 0.3 new HIV infections per 1,000 uninfected people in 2015 compared with 0.33 new infections per 1,000 uninfected people in 2010. During this period, malaria incidence per 1,000 of the at-risk population fell from 118.7 to 94.0 and the incidence of tuberculosis declined from 155 to 142 per 100,000 people. Furthermore, the proportion of the population using an improved drinking-water source increased from 88.4 per cent in 2010 to 90.9 per cent (6.6 billion people) in 2015. The proportion of the population with access to improved sanitation services rose to 67.6 per cent in 2015 from 65.0 per cent in 2010.

31. Investments that increase access to high-impact health and nutrition interventions for the poorest and hardest-to-reach children and communities save almost twice as many lives as equivalent investments in non-poor groups.[23] Moreover, absolute reductions in under-5 mortality rates associated with improvements in intervention coverage were three times faster among poor groups than non-poor groups. Hence, the implementation of equity-enhancing policies and investments and the monitoring of gaps in coverage can reduce child morbidity and mortality and break intergenerational cycles of poverty, thereby helping countries to achieve the child morbidity- and mortality-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. Healthy children tend to have better schooling outcomes and are more likely to have higher labour market earnings as adults.

C. Scaling up universal social protection

32. The past decade has seen an expansion of social protection coverage across the world. In 2015, as many as 1.9 billion people in 136 countries were beneficiaries of some form of social protection programme.[24] In Latin America, conditional cash transfer programmes cover 130 million people or 20.2 per cent of the region's population. In China, the rural minimum living standards guarantee programme (known as *dibao*) covers more than 50 million people, making it the largest social protection programme in the world. Nevertheless, according to International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates, in 2012 only 27 per cent of the working-age population and their families across the globe had access to comprehensive social security systems.[25]

33. The expansion of social protection coverage supports pro-poor growth. Policymakers do not necessarily face a trade-off when pitting the expansion of social protection coverage and the increase in benefits against growth objectives. Social protection measures promote pro-poor growth by preventing the loss of

[22] WHO, *Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990 to 2015 — Estimates by the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund, World Bank Group and the United Nations Population Division* (Geneva, 2015). Available from http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/194254/1/9789241565141_eng.pdf?ua=1.

[23] United Nations Children's Fund, *Narrowing the Gaps: The Power of Investing in the Poorest Children* (New York, 2017). Available from www.unicef.org/publications/files/UNICEF_The_power_of_investing_in_the_poorest_children.pdf.

[24] World Bank, *The State of Social Safety Nets 2015* (Washington, D.C., 2015).

[25] International Labour Organization, *World Social Protection Report 2014/15: Building Economic Recovery, Inclusive Development and Social Justice* (Geneva, 2014). Available from www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_245201.pdf.

productive capital when people face economic hardship. They help poor people to accumulate productive assets, improve access to labour markets and increase investment in human capital, innovation and risk-taking. Social protection can also affect growth through multiplier effects on the local economy as a result of investments in public productive assets and infrastructure, increased household productivity, higher levels of employment and aggregate demand.

34. Higher levels of public social protection expenditure are also associated with lower levels of poverty and inequality. Cash transfers, free tuition and learning materials and school feeding programmes lead to higher school enrolment rates, fewer school dropouts and less child labour by removing demand-side barriers to education, including the need for poor families to rely on children for income and care work. Cash transfer programmes in Colombia, Malawi and Mexico have contributed to reducing stunting among children. In South Africa, children living in households receiving a pension grow on average 5 cm taller than those in households without a pension.

35. Social protection plays a major role in creating access to full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people. Cash transfers, active labour market programmes, health insurance and family-support policies increase labour market participation, especially among women. In South Africa, labour market participation among those receiving cash transfers was 13 to 17 per cent higher than in similar non-recipient households, with the greatest difference among women. The *Chile Joven* programme combines work experience, training and apprenticeships for young people who are unemployed or at high social risk. In India and Uganda, cash transfers have been used to provide employment for local young people and poor people. Public employment programmes have been linked to green jobs and environmental improvements in Brazil and the Philippines.[26]

IV. Poverty eradication: lessons learned from the global food, energy financial and economic crises

36. The Second Decade coincided with the 2007-2008 shocks in food and energy prices and the onset of the global financial and economic crisis that led to the great recession. The Decade also witnessed major natural disasters and an escalation of conflicts that erased years of development progress in some regions. To adequately evaluate the implementation of the Second Decade, policy lessons from the responses to these crises and disasters will be important for maintaining the momentum generated by the implementation of the Decade towards poverty eradication and to ensure that markets work better for people living in poverty.

37. These crises depressed growth, had a negative impact on real incomes and household consumption and worsened poverty and basic human development outcomes, such as education and health. Global levels of unemployment and underemployment also soared. If past experience is any indication, crises of this magnitude tend to have longer-term impacts for poor people and people in vulnerable situations, in particular regarding the nutrition and cognitive development of children. Nutritional deprivation in early childhood is linked to stunting, poor schooling outcomes and reduced productivity in adulthood. The

[26] Anis Chowdhury, "Social protection for shared prosperity and inclusive growth", presentation to the expert group meeting on strategies for eradicating poverty to achieve sustainable development for all, New York, 8 May 2017. Available from www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2017/04/Anis-Chowdhury-Social-Protection-for-shared-prosperity-and-inclusive-growth.pdf.

financial and food crises also forced poor and vulnerable households to alter their health-seeking behaviour and to reduce overall food intake or switch to less expensive and lower-quality foods. These changes increased the risk of undernutrition and micronutrient deficiencies.

38. One key policy lesson learned from these crises is the importance of social policy, including social protection floors, in guarding progress made on poverty eradication in all dimensions. Similarly, it is necessary to pursue forward-looking macroeconomic policies that promote inclusive, sustained and equitable economic growth, and the expansion of employment and decent work opportunities for all. During economic downturns, macroeconomic policies must be consistent with social policy in order to support demand and productive capacity, by maintaining public investment in education, health and social protection, and to boost employment, including through public investments in infrastructure.

39. Record staple food prices during the Second Decade severely constrained access to food for people living in poverty and vulnerable populations, thus aggravating food insecurity. Consequently, the food crises refocused emphasis on agriculture, especially in poor countries. Support to smallholder farmers and investment in agricultural research and development, irrigation, roads and markets were identified as critical interventions. The role of the State in supporting agriculture and the need for development partners to increase aid for agriculture also emerged as important lessons.

40. Evidence from the Second Decade has also shown that many of those who managed to escape extreme poverty continue to lack the capabilities, resources and opportunities to improve their lives and the prospects of their families. Various shocks could easily push people in vulnerable situations back into poverty. Policies to build resilience and support the empowerment of people living in poverty are recognized as essential for sustaining poverty reduction.

41. The crises also underscored the importance of increasing the coverage and benefit levels of social protection systems and measures, including floors, and protecting social investments and programmes that matter to people living in poverty, including women and children. Fiscal austerity measures that were adopted in some countries had a disproportionate impact on women, as the burden resulting from the reduction in public services was transferred to women and girls. In some cases, girls were forced to drop out of school to respond to increased household demand for unpaid care and domestic work. Furthermore, the crises also reinforced the concentration of women in vulnerable and informal employment.

42. It is also important to put in place measures to stimulate labour demand and accelerate employment recovery. The State should also be the employer of last resort. During the great recession, some countries launched employment guarantee schemes, which included labour-intensive public works programmes, keeping more employees in State-run enterprises than necessary and providing federal funding for employment in state and local governments.

43. The Second Decade also witnessed some of the most severe impacts of climate change and natural disasters on economic activities, infrastructure and human lives, highlighting the need to set aside resources for prevention, response, reconstruction and recovery and building resilience.

44. Developing countries emerged from the crisis with strong incentives to diversify their economies, enhance fiscal space by strengthening domestic resource mobilization efforts and keep fiscal deficits and public debt on a sustainable path. Countries have also sought to maximize the impact of macroeconomic, employment and social policies on poverty by ensuring better policy coordination and coherence

across sectors. Countries also took steps to strengthen data collection and analysis to inform evidence-based policymaking.

V. Financing for development

45. The achievement of sustainable development and the eradication of poverty also hinge on the ability of countries to effectively mobilize domestic resources, attract foreign direct investment, fulfill official development assistance commitments and facilitate the transfer of technology. Debt relief and sustainability are critical for heavily indebted poor countries, while remittances have become a significant source of income and finance for receiving economies. Since 2000, all countries have experienced an increase in tax collection despite the decline that occurred following the global financial crisis in 2008. Median tax revenues in the least developed countries increased from under 10 per cent of GDP in 2001 to 14.8 per cent in 2015.[27] The strengthening of domestic resource mobilization should be augmented by tackling illicit activity, including the elimination of illicit financial flows.

46. Capital flows to developing countries remain well below the levels seen between 2010 and 2014. Flows rebounded early in 2017, however, with several large emerging economies recording strong increases in bond and equity inflows. Total foreign direct investment flows to developing economies fell by an estimated 20 per cent in 2016, as low commodity prices deterred investment in commodity-related sectors. Nevertheless, a modest recovery in such flows to developing countries is expected in 2017. Foreign direct investment flows to Africa, developing Asia and Latin America also continue to be heavily concentrated in a few large emerging economies. While the recovery in these capital flows augurs well for growth prospects, their impact on poverty reduction will depend on whether they are directed at sectors that create large numbers of decent jobs. If the resources are solely targeted at capital-intensive extractive sectors, their employment-creation and poverty-reducing effects will be minimal.

47. Total net official development assistance from members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development rose from $119.8 billion in 2008 to $142.6 billion in 2016, reaching a new peak. Net official development assistance also rose as a share of gross national income from 0.30 per cent in 2008 to 0.32 per cent in 2016. A rise in aid spent on refugees in donor countries boosted the total in 2016. Net official development assistance to the least developed countries fell from $41.1 billion in 2010 to $37.3 billion in 2016.[28,29]

VI. National experiences with regard to the implementation of the Second Decade

48. In order to evaluate the implementation of the Second Decade and make recommendations to maintain the momentum generated by the implementation of

[27] *Financing for Development: Progress and Prospects — Report of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development 2017* (United Nations publications, Sales No. E.17.I.5).

[28] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Development aid at its highest level ever in 2008". Available from www.oecd.org/dac/stats/developmentaidatitshighestlevelever in2008.htm.

[29] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, "Development aid rises again in 2016", 11 April 2017. Available from www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/ODA-2016-detailed-summary.pdf.

the Second Decade in accordance with paragraph 49 of General Assembly resolution 71/241, a survey was posted online and sent to all Member States. It contained questions on the legislation, policies and programmes for poverty eradication in each country. Fifty countries completed the survey. The present section contains the key findings.

49. One critical accomplishment at the national level is the commitment made by Member States to developing national strategies to eradicate extreme poverty in all its forms. Of the 50 countries that responded, 44 have developed national plans, strategies or frameworks, including 27 that also revised existing poverty eradication strategies. Thirty countries reported receiving support from the United Nations system in the development of their national poverty eradication plans. Twenty-seven countries received technical support, 15 capacity-building support and 14 financial support. Among the few countries that were not able to develop or revise their plans, four countries cited lack of political commitment, three lack of resources and two lack of institutional capacity. Two countries also indicated that poverty issues were given low priority.

50. Forty-three countries reported that, since 2008, their national poverty eradication frameworks included actions to support the follow-up to the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, related to the eradication of poverty and to coordinate international support to that end. In addition, since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 39 countries have national frameworks that support the follow-up to the implementation of this new agenda and the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals.

51. Thirty-seven countries reported having a national coordinating body on poverty eradication. The most common institutional set-up is a ministerial committee or unit (30 countries), followed by a national commission or council (16 countries). Nine countries also reported having institutional arrangements that included non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and donors.

52. Countries also reported on whether, to ensure that no one is left behind, their national poverty eradication frameworks specifically addressed the concerns of people in vulnerable situations, including women, children and young people, indigenous peoples, older persons, persons with disabilities, migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons. National frameworks addressed the specific needs of older persons in 31 countries, persons with disabilities in 30 countries, children in 28 countries, migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons in 28 countries and young people in 27 countries. Twenty-four countries reported addressing the specific needs of indigenous groups. Thirty-three countries have also taken specific measures to alleviate poverty in rural, remote and mountainous areas.

53. Another accomplishment is the increased attention to employment. Twenty-five countries reported having adopted policies consistent with the Global Jobs Pact adopted by ILO. In that regard, 30 countries reported having integrated the decent work agenda into their national policies and programmes since 2008. Thirty-three countries have taken specific measures to promote full employment and decent work for disadvantaged groups. Twenty-six countries have specific measures for youth, 24 have measures for persons with disabilities and 17 have measures for other vulnerable or marginalized groups. For example, Slovakia has put in place specific measures to promote employment among older persons and marginalized Roma communities.

54. The Second Decade also placed emphasis on the importance of resource mobilization and partnerships for poverty eradication. Since 2008, 25 countries have put in place national strategies to mobilize resources from various sources. They

held domestic resource mobilization meetings with donors and the private sector and promoted relationships with new and potential donors. Sixteen countries established international partnerships with donor agencies, 15 with NGOs and 9 with civil society organizations. Twenty-three countries reported that, since 2008, they had adopted strategies and measures, including changes in legislation, to form partnerships with organizations dealing with poverty eradication and sustainable development issues. Of those, 15 countries had formed South-South partnerships, 9 had formed North-South partnerships and 7 had established triangular cooperation. Countries have also established partnerships at the national level, primarily with donor agencies, national NGOs and the private sector. Thirteen countries reported having established partnerships with women's groups, 12 with youth groups, 12 with community leaders and 9 with the media.

55. Greater attention was given to national contexts during the Second Decade. Twenty countries reported having reviewed their national policies since 2008 to adapt international, continental and regional policies, strategies and frameworks to their national circumstances. Eighteen countries formulated plans and programmes and 17 formulated new or reviewed existing legislation to that effect. Other countries also improved service delivery, undertook advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns, built consensus and partnerships and reformed public institutions. Member States have also used different poverty measures to track progress at the national level. Thirty countries used national monetary poverty lines and 19 international monetary poverty lines. Twenty-two countries also reported using multidimensional measures and 17 non-monetary measures, such as calorie consumption.

56. Monitoring and evaluation of poverty eradication strategies and programmes at the national level were also strengthened. Thirty countries assigned responsibilities to their national institutions to support the follow-up to the implementation of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. Twenty-two countries put in place ministerial committees, 14 have national commissions, 5 worked with NGOs or donors and 6 partnered with community and religious organizations. Three countries established parliamentary committees. Thirty countries developed mechanisms to monitor and measure progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals. Nineteen countries established multisectoral coordinating bodies, 13 conducted annual national surveys on the status of implementation and 12 appointed focal points or desk officers to oversee the implementation process. The Government of Germany, for example, has been reporting every four years on the implementation status of its national sustainable development strategy that was developed in 2002. The strategy includes national sustainability goals and indicators that allow for the regular measurement of progress and help to identify any wrong turns in policy. Furthermore, the Federal Statistical Office publishes an independent indicator report with information about progress towards meeting the goals every two years.

57. To better track progress and ensure that no one is left behind, most countries reported having collected disaggregated data on poverty by income, sex, age and geographical location. Nevertheless, few countries reported having collected data by race or ethnicity, migration status and/or disability status. To strengthen their national statistical capacity and monitoring systems, 25 countries strengthened the capacity of their national institutions for data collection, processing, analysis and utilization, 20 created or strengthened their national statistical services, 19 trained staff on database management and 18 supported the development of national databases and management information systems. Seventeen countries also reported having mobilized donor support to strengthen national statistical capacity.

58. Despite progress in several areas, countries identified challenges affecting the implementation of poverty eradication strategies and programmes. These include the need for greater budgetary resources and capacity for policy development, increased human resources dedicated to poverty eradication issues and greater support from international agencies, including the United Nations, together with strengthened interministerial or interdepartmental coordination.

59. Efforts to eradicate extreme poverty stand a greater chance of success when countries take measures to promote the active participation of those living in extreme poverty in the design and implementation of programmes and policies that address multidimensional poverty. Twenty countries reported having involved people living in poverty in the design and implementation of such programmes and policies. For example, the "Progressing with solidarity" programme of the Dominican Republic involves people living in extreme poverty in the diagnosis of needs and priorities, and the design of social protection strategies. In France, the National Council for Policies to Reduce Poverty and Social Exclusion includes persons facing social exclusion to ensure that their views are considered in evaluating poverty eradication mechanisms. As part of national implementation of the European platform against poverty and social exclusion, Austria has established a national platform to combat poverty and social exclusion that guarantees a permanent dialogue with all relevant stakeholders.

VII. United Nations system support for the Second Decade

60. The United Nations system continues to support the implementation of the objectives of the Second Decade through activities under the inter-agency, system-wide plan of action for poverty eradication. ILO promoted adherence to core labour standards and supports more than 50 countries in the design of national public employment programmes and labour-based schemes to rehabilitate and improve physical and environmental infrastructure and services. It is also contributing to policies and strategies that are influencing labour-intensive schemes and creating better synergies between the humanitarian-development nexus. ILO, together with other development partners, has been involved in the development of various inter-agency social protection assessment tools, including a public works assessment tool.

61. Since 2014, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development, the World Food Programme and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women have been implementing a joint programme to accelerating progress towards the economic empowerment of rural women, which addresses key structural barriers to gender equality and the economic empowerment of women. The programme focuses on improving food security and nutrition for rural women, together with their incomes, leadership roles and participation in both rural institutions and the shaping of laws, policies and programmes.

62. FAO continues to actively promote decent rural employment and income diversification. The FAO Social Protection Framework seeks to maximize the impact of social protection on hunger, rural poverty and resilience by building and strengthening social protection systems that are integrated into broader livelihood promotion and rural development strategies. FAO has partnered with the United Nations Children's Fund in countries in sub-Saharan Africa to demonstrate the impact that cash transfer programmes can have on ending poverty. FAO supports country efforts to create decent farm and off-farm employment and improve policy coherence between social protection and food security and nutrition, agriculture and

rural development, and ensure effective operational design of social protection schemes. It also seeks to scale up decent jobs for young people through the United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development.

63. The aim of the strategic plan of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is to help countries to simultaneously achieve the eradication of poverty and a significant reduction in inequalities and exclusion. UNDP promotes greater awareness about the decent work agenda as an effective strategy for poverty eradication and shares good practices to promote employment and decent work at the national and international levels. It also supports the integration of decent work for poverty eradication into national and international policies and programmes and supports employment creation for young people through the United Nations system-wide Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth. Through the United Nations mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support strategy, UNDP supports countries in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2015, UNDP support enabled 53 countries to adopt, expand or implement social protection systems. By the end of 2017, UNDP expects to have helped 48 countries to strengthen the capacity of civil society to engage meaningfully in pro-poor policy debates and action.

64. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) continues to promote the achievement of inclusive and sustainable industrial development. The Programme for Country Partnership accelerates and customizes the technical assistance provided by UNIDO to countries by rapidly scaling up national industrial agendas. UNIDO is also engaged in creating youth employment opportunities by supporting the creation and expansion of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in over 15 countries. Since 2010, UNIDO has also been working on fostering market access of agrifood and handicraft value chains in developing countries through the Origin consortia project.

65. The Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) has been working with other partners to address cross-cutting policy issues with an impact on poverty. Advocacy work has been an important focus of these efforts and includes the preparation of a regional advocacy paper entitled "Building more inclusive, sustainable and prosperous societies in Europe and Central Asia". The Commission's activities under its Gender and Economy Programme have included focusing on creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurship among women, including through the organization of subregional and regional forums for women entrepreneurs to address concerns such as the networking opportunities, access to credit and specific knowledge and skills. ECE is also engaged in the measurement of poverty, inequality and vulnerability. Its task force on poverty measurement has worked with Member States to exchange knowledge and best practices in poverty measurement, with the goal of developing guidelines and recommendations for improving the international comparability and availability of statistics on poverty.

66. Within the Secretariat, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is responsible for promoting and supporting international cooperation to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Department provides normative and policy support to the intergovernmental processes in social, economic and environmental areas. It conducts analyses of and research into key sustainable development challenges and policy options and provides technical support to Member States on issues such as policy coherence and statistical development. Its flagship publications underscore the critical role of full employment and decent work for all for poverty eradication, the fostering of social inclusion and efforts to combat inequality. These reports also call for better coordination of social and macroeconomic policies to promote long-term stabilization, which could support the goal of full employment. Its work on social groups, such as young people, persons

with disabilities, older persons and indigenous groups, ensures that no one will be left behind. Such analytical normative work, supplemented by capacity-building activities in support of developing countries, formed an integral part of the efforts of the United Nations system to implement the objectives of the Second Decade.

VIII. Conclusion and recommendations

67. The Second Decade contributed to progress in eradicating poverty at the national level while also serving as an effective platform for coordination of increased United Nations system support to countries for inclusive development. Continued political commitment to eradicating poverty in all its forms is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Considering the uneven progress made by countries and regions in implementing the objectives of the Second Decade and to support the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the General Assembly may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) Developing countries should promote structural transformation that is driven by sustainable and inclusive industrialization to effectively reduce poverty and promote economic growth with employment creation. In promoting industrial growth, countries should support employment-intensive small and medium-sized enterprises and pursue specific policies to assist the working poor trapped in low-skill, low-productivity and low-wage jobs. Successful transformation also requires the prioritization of investment in farm and off-farm activities to improve food security and nutrition and to boost rural incomes. Rural cooperatives and institutions should be engaged to contribute to poverty eradication;

(b) Countries should address inequality as an integral part of poverty eradication strategies through public policy and market-based mechanisms that improve access to employment, infrastructure, education, health care and other essential services to enable sustained and inclusive development that increases income for all;

(c) To promote decent work for poverty eradication, countries should implement an integrated approach towards the formalization of informal economies by simultaneously facilitating the transition of workers and economic units from the informal to the formal economy and promoting the creation and preservation of enterprises and decent jobs in the formal economy through the promotion of coherent macroeconomic, employment, social protection and other social policies. In this regard, countries should explore effective ways to respond to the employment challenges faced by young people, women, persons with disabilities and older persons through multipronged approaches that address both the quality and quantity of employment opportunities;

(d) In order to develop human capital, countries need to tackle the lack of equal opportunities, improve the quality of education, build education infrastructure and invest in teachers. Education systems should provide young people with the right mix of knowledge and experience to prepare for active citizenship; similarly, countries should bolster investment in primary health care and large-scale interventions that include child vaccination and anti-malaria campaigns, and the provision of antiretroviral therapy, to reduce the burden of disease and health inequalities;

(e) Labour market policies should significantly improve the terms and conditions of women's participation in the labour market by facilitating the reconciliation of unpaid care work with employment and eliminate gender discrimination in the labour market;

(f) In order to escape poverty, developing countries require knowledge, adaptation measures and innovation suited to their national circumstances. The private sector and civil society organizations should support poverty eradication efforts by testing, developing and promoting the scaling-up of cost-effective and contextualized solutions;

(g) The United Nations system should continue to coordinate its support to developing countries in their efforts to eradicate poverty, the key challenge in the integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda.